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FBI report: Top contributor to Giuliani, Schumer has mob ties

BYLINE: By TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, Associated Press Writer

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A wealthy contributor to the political campaigns of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Sen. Charles Schumer is a suspected member of a Brooklyn-based Russian crime syndicate whose company has laundered millions of dollars, according to internal FBI documents.

Semyon (Sam) Kislin, 64, along with family members and businesses, gave \$46,250 to Giuliani's mayoral campaigns in 1993 and 1997 and \$8,000 to Schumer's 1998 U.S. Senate campaign.

Kislin, a commodities trader prominent in the Russian Jewish emigre communities of south Brooklyn, has denied any money laundering or other wrongdoing. He was vacationing in the Bahamas and could not be reached for comment.

His suspected involvement with organized crime was first reported Tuesday by the Center for Public Integrity, a nonprofit, nonpartisan group based in Washington D.C.

Kislin and his family have also donated to the re-election campaigns of President Bill Clinton and former Republican Sen. Alfonse D'Amato. In 1997, Kislin's company, Trans Commodities, also gave \$30,000 to the Liberal Party, which has backed Giuliani on each of his runs for mayor, and \$7,700 to Jules Polonetsky, Giuliani's running mate in 1997 and the current commissioner of Consumer Affairs.

Kislin also claims to have co-chaired a Giuliani for Senate fund-raiser at a Manhattan hotel on May 25 that raised \$2.1 million for Giuliani's political action

committee. In 1996, he held a fund-raiser for Giuliani in a Brooklyn restaurant.

"I did a lot of fund raising for Giuliani," Kislin said in an interview with the Center for Public Integrity. "He's a good man, doing a good job for the city of New York."

Kislin is also a board member of the city's Economic Development Corporation, which is charged with protecting the city's job and economic base.

Bruce Teitelbaum, who heads Giuliani's exploratory Senate campaign, denied that Kislin was co-chair of the fund-raiser and added that Kislin has not given Giuliani's exploratory committee any money. Teitelbaum said the campaign had been unaware of Kislin's alleged ties to organized crime.

"Obviously, we didn't know any of this," said Teitelbaum. "He has not contributed to the (Senate) campaign, nor to the federal PAC. He has not contributed (to Giuliani) in over two-and-a-half years."

At a press conference Tuesday, Giuliani said he knew Kislin and his wife, Ludmila, but was not aware of Kislin's reputed mob ties.

"I'm not aware of any of the allegations," said Giuliani. "They have not contributed to the federal (Senate) campaign...They have not raised any money (for me) since, I think, September 1997."

The two likely candidates for the New York Senate seat are Giuliani and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

A spokeswoman for Schumer said the senator had also been unaware of Kislin's ties.

"Our campaign policy was to do background checks on our donors," said the spokeswoman, Cathie Levine. "Our research raised no red flags. If any of the allegations prove true, we will absolutely return the money."

Kislin has been investigated by the FBI, but despite internal FBI reports alleging money laundering and mob ties, the agency has not pursued charges.

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FBI spokesman Joe Valiquette refused to comment Tuesday.

But a 1994 FBI intelligence report obtained by The Associated Press claims Kislin is a "member or associate" of a Brighton Beach crime operation headed by Vyacheslav "Little Japanese" Ivankov.

Ivankov was given a 10-year prison sentence in 1997 for extortion and for a fraudulent marriage aimed at preventing his deportation.

Federal prosecutors said Ivankov was a "godfather" of Russian organized crime in the United States and abroad. Russian authorities said his criminal organization operated in the United States, Canada and Europe, as well as Russia.

In his interview with the Center for Public Integrity, Kislin said he does not know Ivankov and noted that though he has been investigated by the FBI, he has never been charged with a crime. He also denied that his company, Trans Commodities, had laundered money for Russian organized crime figures.

However, an FBI report says Trans Commodities "is known to have laundered millions of dollars from Russia to New York."

The FBI and Interpol also claim that Trans Commodities co-sponsored a U.S. visa for Anton Malevskiy, the head of one of Russia's top mafia families, the Izmaylovo gang. Malevskiy is also alleged to be a contract killer.

Further, Mikhail Chernoy, the company's manager between 1988 and 1992, was involved in the takeover of the Russian aluminum industry through alleged embezzlement, money laundering and contract killing, according to the Russian national police.

PERSON: SEMYON (SAM)
KISLIN (95%); RUDOLPH WILLIAM
GIULIANI (94%); CHARLES
SCHUMER (93%); BRUCE
TEITELBAUM (57%); ALFONSE M
D'AMATO (53%);

ORGANIZATION: FEDERAL BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATION (93%); CENTER FOR PUBLIC
INTEGRITY (58%);

COUNTRY: UNITED STATES (66%); NORTH
AMERICA (66%); RUSSIA (57%); ASIA (57%); BAHAMAS (55%);

STATE: NEW YORK (58%); DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA, USA (54%);

CITY: BROOKLYN (58%);

COMPANY: TRANS
COMMODITIES (64%); FEDERAL BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATION (93%); CENTER FOR PUBLIC
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LAUNDERING (74%); POLITICAL ACTION
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DEVELOPMENT (72%); COMMODITIES
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